

Ancient Egyptian Ancestors



TRIBES OF THE EARTH WORLD MAP, CIRCA 3,300 BC



MAP IS BASED ON THE HIERAKONPOLIS TOMB 100 MURAL, WITH GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS ADDED BY EAGLEWIND, 2007

Part One

I

- ¹ The **Naqada culture** of **Chalcolithic Predynastic Egypt** (c. 4400–3000 BCE) which took over from the **Badarian**, around 4500 BCE, became, *arguably*, the most important prehistoric culture in **Upper Egypt**. It was named for the town of **Naqada**, Qena Governorate, where much of the archaeological evidence for the period was found. The town was the centre of the **cult of Set** - and large tombs were built there (c. 3500 BCE).

Flinders Petrie ¹ was the first to produce a chronology for the Naqada Period. Using pottery he developed the sequence dates. Eventually he divided the **Naqada** period into **three main periods**:

¹ Sir William Matthew Flinders Petrie, FRS, FBA (3 June 1853 – 28 July 1942), commonly known as **Flinders Petrie**, was an English Egyptologist and a pioneer of systematic methodology in archaeology and preservation of artifacts: Petrie developed the system of dating layers based on pottery and ceramic findings. He held the first chair of Egyptology in the United Kingdom, and excavated many of the most important archaeological sites in Egypt in conjunction with his Irish-born Egyptologist and wife **Hilda Mary Isabel Petrie née Umlin** (1871–1957).



Amratian (named after the cemetery near El-Amrah) sequence dates 31-37

Gerzean (after the cemetery near Gerzeh) sequence dates 38-62

Semainian (after the cemetery near Es-Semaina) sequence dates 63-76

Later German archaeologist **Werner Kaiser**, credited with the rebirth of interest in early Egypt, refined the sequence dates and divided the Naqada period into several *Stufen* (steps or phases). Kaiser's system remains in use with some slight modifications: Kaiser *also* introduced several subdivisions for his Stufen:

Naqada I a-b-c (about 4000 - 3500 BCE): The culture is still similar to the **Badarian culture**. The dead were buried in simple oval pits; some larger tombs appear; black-topped pottery is the typical ware; and, painted pottery appears.

Naqada II a-b-c (about 3500 - 3200 BCE): The culture appears throughout Egypt. Some individuals are buried in larger, more elaborate tombs; new pottery types appear: **marl pottery**, sometimes decorated, sometimes rough. Considerable development in techniques in **metallurgy**, stone vessels and perfect **flint knives**.

Naqada III a-b-c (about 3200 - 3000 BCE): In Upper Egypt cemeteries include extremely wealthy burials, revealing stark social differences. Cylinder jars are characteristic grave goods - and the **first writing appears**.

A 2013 Oxford University **radio carbon dating** study of the Predynastic period, *however*, suggests a date beginning sometime between 3800-3700 BCE. The **final phase of the Naqada culture** is **Naqada III**, which is coterminous with the **Protodynastic Period** (**Early Bronze Age** (c. 3200–3000 BCE) in ancient Egypt.

² The early phase of **Naqada I**, also called **Amratian** (because of deposits found near the village of that name), ran in **parallel to the Badarian culture**, but slowly replaced it. They *also* lived in **small villages** and they developed the **cultivation of the Nile valley**; but the culture is most notable for the increase in **artistic accomplishment** and the proliferation of bearded male figures in addition to the female **fertility figures**.

Each village had its own **"animal deity"** which was **"totemistically"** associated with the **"clan"** of the villagers. This formed the basis of the **nome system** which divided Egypt into **regions** represented by their **totems**.

In **Naqada I** graves, the deceased were *buried with statuettes* to keep them company in the *afterlife*. These were the forerunners of *ushabti figures* found in Egyptian tombs. Along with these figures, the dead person was buried with food, weapons, amulets, ornaments and decorated vases and palettes.

The **Naqada II** (also known as **Gerzean** *due to finds near the village of that name*) phase began around 3500 BCE. This culture mastered the *art of agriculture* and the use of *artificial irrigation*, and no longer needed to hunt for their food. The people started live in *towns*, not just villages, creating *areas of higher population density* than ever before.

The culture continued to develop their *artistic tendencies*, creating *new styles of pottery* and more *intricate carving*. Many animal-shaped and shield-shaped *palettes* (used for mixing *cosmetics*) have been recovered. They form a clear link in development towards the *ceremonial palettes* of the early dynastic period (e.g., the Narmer palette). They also developed their skills in *metalworking*, in particular *copper* - a means of commerce and trade amongst the ancient peoples of Mesopotamia and Asia. The introduction of *cylindrical seals* (a typically Mesopotamian device) showed *that* their culture was influenced by *their neighbours...* but the familiar Egyptian godlings *Hathor*, *Ra* and *Horus* also date to this period.

Their burial rituals also changed: They created *rectangular graves* whose walls were lined with *masonry* or *wood* (n.b., “the body was not specifically oriented towards the setting sun”). There was a marked difference in the quality of grave goods between the rich and poor and many contained pottery which had been ritually shattered during the funeral. **Tomb 100** (“*The Painted Tomb*”) at **Hierakonpolis** is the earliest known decorated tomb, which was most likely the resting place of a local leader but may also have been reused and enhanced during the Naqada III phase.

(possibly Naqada’s king). The defeated king or place named in the graffito was “**Bull’s Head**” - *a marking also found in U-j (q.v.)*.

Scorpion I (c. early–mid-32nd century BCE) was the first of two rulers of Upper Egypt with that name, during **Naqada III**. His name may refer to the *scorpion goddess Serket*, though evidence suggests Serket’s rise in popularity to be in the **Old Kingdom**, bringing doubt to whether Scorpion actually took his name from her. He was one of the first rulers of ancient Egypt.

Scorpion is believed to have lived in **Thinis** one or two centuries before the rule of the better-known **Scorpion II of Nekhen** and is *presumably* the **first true king of Upper Egypt**. To him belongs the **U-j tomb** found in the royal cemetery of Abydos where Thinite kings were buried. That tomb was plundered in antiquity, but in it were found many *small ivory plaques*, each with a hole for tying it to something, and each marked with one-or-more *hieroglyph-type scratched images* which are thought to be names of towns... *perhaps to tie the offerings and tributes to keep track of which came from which town*. Two of those plaques seem to name the towns **Baset** and **Buto**, showing that Scorpion’s armies had penetrated the **Nile Delta**. It may be *that* the conquests of Scorpion started the Egyptian hieroglyphic system which was initiated by *a need to keep records in writing*.

Scorpion’s tomb is known in archaeology circles for its possible evidence of *ancient wine consumption*. In a search of the tomb, archaeologists discovered dozens of *imported ceramic jars* containing a *yellow residue consistent with wine*, dated to about 3150 BCE. Chemical *residues of herbs, tree resins*, and other *natural substances* were found in the jars. *Grape seeds, skins* and *dried pulp* were also found in the tomb.

² **Double Falcon** (also *possibly Dju* and *Nebwy*) was a ruler of Lower Egypt from **Naqada III**. He *may have* reigned during the 32nd century BCE. The length of his reign is unknown.

2. ¹ Iry-Hor or Ro (as read by **Petrie**) was a *predynastic pharaoh of ancient Egypt*, although some archaeologists are doubtful of his existence. He was most likely Ka’s immediate predecessor. He ruled over Abydos and was buried in its local cemetery at **Umm el-Qa’ab** near **Ka**, **Narmer** and the **First Dynasty kings**.

The argument against his existence rests on the *lack of a serekh* in front of his name and poor attestation. The only other inscription of **Iry-Hor** outside of Abydos is located in **Lower Egypt**, while **Ka** and **Narmer** have many inscriptions *located as far as Israel*. **Toby Wilkinson** dismisses the tomb as a storage pit and the name as a treasury mark.

Supporters point to the size and location of the tomb: It is *a double tomb* as big as Ka’s and Narmer’s, *located within a sequential order linking the older “U” cemetery with the First Dynasty tombs*. The name is inscribed on a large jar, like that of other pharaohs, and contains the *royal Horus falcon*. The *serekh* could have been a tradition that started with **Ka**.

² **Ka**, also **Sekhem Ka**, was a *predynastic pharaoh of Upper Egypt*. The “**Ka**” is part of “*soul*” in Egyptian religion. Ka ruled over Abydos in the late-32nd or early-31st century BCE and was buried at **Umm el-Qa’ab**. He most likely was the immediate successor to Iry-Hor and was succeeded by Narmer. He is the earliest known Egyptian king with a serekh, inscribed on a number of artifacts.

³ **Scorpion**, also **King Scorpion** or **Scorpion II** refers to the second of two kings in Upper Egypt during the **Protodynastic Period**. Their names *may* refer to the *scorpion goddess Serket*. The name of the queen who was his consort was **Shesh I** - the mother of **Narmer** and the grand-grandmother of another queen, **Shesh II**. He is believed to have lived just before or during the rule of Narmer at **Thinis**.

The only pictorial evidence of his existence is the **Scorpion Macehead** that was found by archeologists James E. Quibell and Frederick W. Green in a temple at **Nekhen (Hierakonpolis)** during the dig season of 1897/1898. *It is currently on display at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford*. The *stratigraphy* of this macehead was lost due to the methods of its excavators, but its style seems to date it to the very end of the **Predynastic Period**. Though *badly damaged*, the visible parts are *extraordinary records from this early time in Egyptian history*. He

Part Two

I

Predynastic Pharaohs of Ancient Egypt

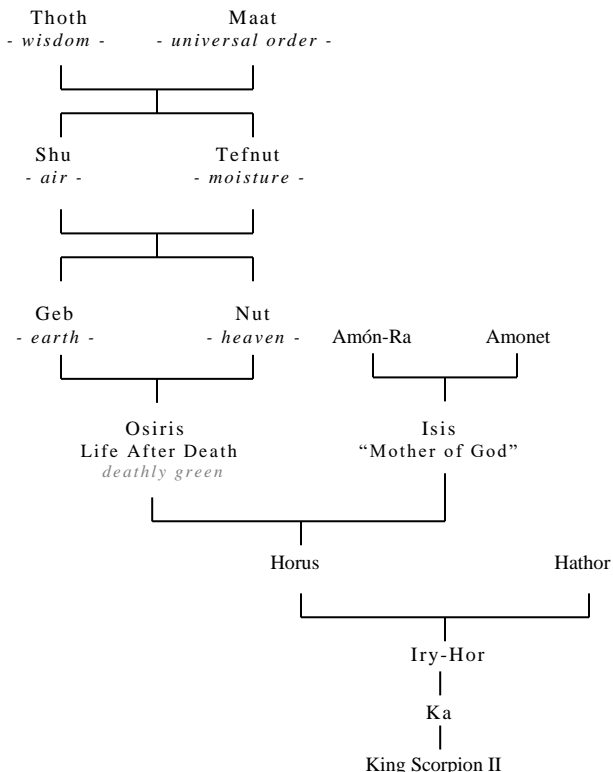
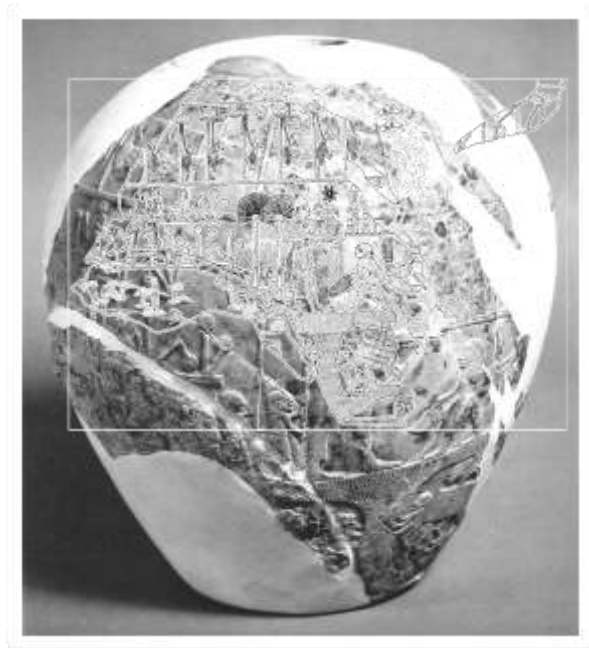


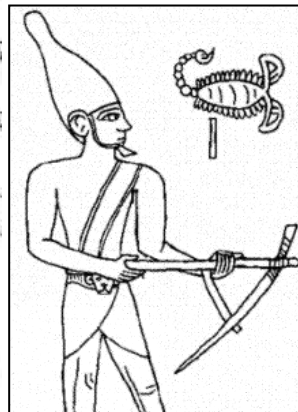
Chart Predynastic Pharaohs of Ancient Egypt

1. ¹ Recently a **5000-year-old graffito** has been discovered in the **Theban Desert Road Survey** that *also* bears the symbols of **Scorpion** and depicts his victory over another protodynastic ruler

is believed to have lived just before or during the rule of Narmer at Thinis for this reason, and *also* because of the content of the macehead.



Scorpion Macehead



The **Scorpion Macehead** depicts a single large figure wearing the **white Crown of Upper Egypt**. He holds a *hoe*, which has been interpreted as a *ritual* either involving the *pharaoh ceremonially cutting the first furrow in the fields*, or *opening the dikes to flood them*. The name "**Scorpion**" is derived from the image of a scorpion that appears immediately in front of his face that may represent the scorpion goddess **Serket**, just below a *flower with seven petals*; the use and placement of the iconography is similar to the depiction of the pharaoh Narmer on the obverse side of the **Narmer Palette**. **Protodynastic hieroglyphics** are difficult to read, but the *dead*

lapwings (meaning Lower Egyptians) and the *nine bows* (meaning the traditional enemies of Egyptians) found on the macehead are interpreted as evidence *that* he began the attacks on Lower Egypt which eventually resulted in Narmer's victory and unification of the country. The lapwing was *also* used as a *hieroglyph* meaning "*common people*," so the *standards* these are attached to may represent the names of particular towns Scorpion conquered.

A second, smaller mace head fragment is referred to as the **Minor Scorpion macehead**. Little is left of this mace head, though it clearly depicts the pharaoh wearing the **Red Crown of Lower Egypt**. There are several theories regarding his identity. Some might argue that, because Egyptian kings of the **First Dynasty** seems to have had multiple names, *Scorpion was the same person as Narmer*, simply with an alternate name. Others have identified **King Scorpion** with Narmer's predecessor, **Ka** (or **Sekhen**); Edwards in 1965 considered **Ka's glyph** - the outstretched arms of the ka sign - as simply a stylistically different version of a scorpion. The historian Susan Wise Bauer maintains that **Scorpion II** and Narmer were indeed two separate kings, but that Scorpion II reigned in 3200 BCE, a century before Narmer. Because Scorpion II is not attested at **Abydos**, he could be a contemporary king to Narmer, who *eventually* lost or bequeathed **Nekhen** to Narmer. A British television programme proposed that the macehead was a tribute by Narmer to King Scorpion I (whose tomb at Abydos is known). According to this theory, there was only one protodynastic king Scorpion, rather than two as is commonly maintained.

First Dynasty of Ancient Egypt

Name	Comments	Dates
Narmer	- probably Menes on earlier lists	c. 3100–3050 B.C.
Hor-Aha		c. 3050–3049 B.C.
Djer	-	c. 3049–3008 B.C. 41 years (Palermo Stone)
Djet	-	3008–2975?
Merneith	the mother of Den	3008?
Den	-	2975–2935 30 to 50 years (40 years?)
Anedjib	-	2935?–2925? 10 years (Palermo Stone)
Semerket	-	2925?–2916? 9 years (Palermo Stone)
Qa'a	-	2916?–2890 B.C.

3. ¹ Narmer was an Egyptian Pharaoh who ruled in the 32nd century BC. Thought to be the successor to the predynastic Kings Scorpion or "Selk" and/or Ka, he is considered by some to be the unifier of Egypt and founder of the First dynasty, and therefore the first king of all Egypt. There is a growing consensus that Scorpion and Narmer are identical, but no identification with any early king can yet be definitively proven.

Narmer was an ancient Egyptian king of the Early Dynastic Period. He probably was the successor to the Protodynastic king Ka, or possibly Scorpion. Some consider him the unifier of Egypt and founder of the First Dynasty, and in turn the first king of a unified Egypt.